
2014 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST FAIRFIELD RANGER DISTRICT

This letter will serve as our Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) for the Sheep Basin and Corral Creek Allotments during the 2014 grazing season.

ALLOTMENTS: Sheep Basin C&H & Corral Creek S&G

PERMITTEE(S)	Permitted Head Months	Permitted Season of Use	Authorized Numbers	Authorized Days or Season of Use
SHEEP BASIN CATTLE			NOT TO EXCEED	BETWEEN
National Forest (On)	670 C/C HMs	6/16- 9/20	115 C/C pairs	6/16- 9/20
Private & State land (Off)	191 C/C HMs	6/16- 9/20	60 C/C pairs	6/16- 9/20
TOTAL	861 C/C HMs	6/16- 9/20	175 C/C pairs	6/16- 9/20
Resource Protection Non-Use			(70 C/C) pairs	
SHEEP BASIN SHEEP				Authorized Time
National Forest + Private	493 E/L HMs	6/07 - 6/21	1100 E/L	6/12-7/7
National Forest + Private	493 Ewe HMs	8/11 - 8/25	1100 Ewes	8/6-8/20
CORRAL CREEK SHEEP				
National Forest	1,266 E/L HMs	7/01 - 8/04	1100 E/L	7/8-8/4
TOTAL NF & PVT.	2,252 Sheep HMs		1100 Sheep	

C/C = Cows with calves, E/L = Ewes with lambs, Dries = Ewes w/o lambs

Authorized Days/Time occurs within the permitted season of use.

COMPLIANCE

These Annual Operating Instructions are a part of your Term Grazing Permit (TGP), Part 2, Clause 8(a), and you have agreed to their conditions upon signing your TGP. Failure to follow the instructions in this AOI is a violation of your TGP. The contents of this year's AOI reflect what we have jointly agreed to. Situations may develop during the grazing season which require changes to these instructions. This may include changes in animal numbers, class of livestock, period of use (changes in entry or exit dates from unit to unit), or changes in pasture rotation.

If it becomes necessary to change or if you cannot comply with any of these instructions, contact Renee Kehler, the Range Management Specialist, at the Fairfield office to notify and obtain permission before initiating the desired change. If the request is a major change, the Fairfield District Ranger or his immediate staff will respond in writing. No major changes to these instructions will be official without this written verification.

2013 GRAZING SEASON REVIEW OF SHEEP BASIN C&H

Utilization Review:

No utilization issues were identified during last grazing season.

Management Effectiveness Review:

Management of cattle across your allotment was acceptable during the 2013 season.

Monitoring:

This summer we will continue to gather data at Designated Monitoring Areas (DMA's). Future adaptive management decisions will be based on this monitoring.

Resource Conflicts:

We will continue to analyze potential issues during the 2014 grazing season. If resource problems are identified during this time, we will discuss them with you.

Noxious Weed Management:

Only hay and straw that has been certified as free of noxious weeds will be allowed on National Forest System Lands in Idaho.

BILLING INFORMATION

Grazing fees for this season will again be \$1.35 per head month. Payments must be made by the due date shown on your grazing bill. The process takes about 10 days from the time you submit your payment until it is processed through Lockbox and notification is received by the Forest Service. Notice of payment must be received by the district office prior to your turn out. If notice has not been received, you will not be allowed to place livestock on your allotments. Payment in Full validates your Term Grazing Permit and authorizes you to graze during the 2014 grazing season. Cattle must be owned by the term permit holder and marked with brand(s) authorized on the Term Grazing Permit application.

SHEEP BASIN - CATTLE MANAGEMENT

PLANNED 2014 PASTURE MOVE SEQUENCE

<u>Pasture Sequence</u>	Entry	*Approx. Duration	Numbers	Remarks
1. Cow Creek	6/16	6/16 – 7/06	175	
2. Hawk Gulch		7/07 – 7/31	175	
3. Maxfield/Thompson		8/01 – 8/27	175	
4. Sheep Basin		8/28– 9/20	175	Off NF on 9/20

All bulls or calves over six months of age will be considered permitted livestock. Livestock will be authorized only for the season, number, and allotment displayed on the Bill for Collection.

*Planned use can be adjusted according to range readiness or the availability of forage and water. The length of stay in each pasture may need to be adjusted depending on residual stubble height (4" move trigger) and overall grazing impact, especially within riparian areas. If the projected season does not meet your expectations, you may need to consider shortening the period of use or removing a portion of your permitted numbers (cow/calf pairs).

How soon the maximum allowable use level is reached depends on multiple factors such as the number of animals, drought conditions, weather conditions, and your ability to distribute cattle uniformly across the allotment. It will be your responsibility to move your cattle to the next pasture before the maximum allowable use is exceeded. **If unsure about when you are approaching the four-inch stubble height move trigger bring it to our attention and we will help you evaluate if a longer stay is warranted.** Convincing evidence must exist before an extension of the planned grazing period is granted. Permittees are responsible to manage their livestock to insure allowable use levels are not exceeded.

ALLOWABLE COW USE - Allowable use is the degree of grazing specified for a particular area or on key plant(s). Refer to the use level stated below. It is the maximum utilization allowed on key upland grasses (40-50% or about 3" left) such as Idaho fescue or bluebunch wheatgrass and key riparian sedges (about 4" left) such as Nebraska sedge. These use levels are the same ones contained in Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit.

MONITORING - Utilization will be monitored by the permittee and by forest personnel. We welcome your participation in these monitoring activities. Designated monitoring areas are key areas that will be used to determine the maximum allowable cow grazing on the Sheep Basin Allotment. Key areas are defined as relatively small areas that serve as pasture monitoring and evaluation sites. These areas guide general management and will reflect the overall acceptability of current grazing use within a pasture. It will be your responsibility to monitor use and move cattle when use standards have been achieved.

FOREST PLAN UTILIZATION STANDARDS

Starting in October (end of growing season) stubble height measurements are taken on representative areas of each pasture to determine if the programmatic Forest Plan standard has been met. Variation in utilization standards to achieve specific vegetative management objectives can differ from the Forest Plan. For example, an Allotment Management Plan might assign very restrictive use standards to help improve site-specific T&E species habitat. The following discussion only pertains to the assigned Forest Plan utilization standard.

A) Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season/Cow Creek pasture -- 40% use. After seed ripe conditions, or late season pastures -- 50% use, (approximately 3").

B) Riparian Areas: Retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of greenline species (sedges). We have designated monitoring areas (DMAs) established within your Cow Creek, Maxfield/Thompson, and Hawk Gulch Pastures where we measure multiple indicators such as stubble height, bank alteration, bank stability, woody browse utilization, and woody species regeneration. If allowable use occurs prior to the end of your authorized season while you are in the last NF pasture, cattle may be required to leave the allotment.

Nebraska sedge communities (moist sites): Standard = 4-inches of residual stubble

CATTLE ALLOTMENT STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

See Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit for a list of structural range developments. The permittee will inspect and maintain all developments according to the Term Grazing Permit specifications. This is required before cattle enter or are placed into the next pasture. Livestock may be held off or may be required to leave the allotment if assigned maintenance has not been completed. Allotment boundary fences must be maintained prior to the entry dates of adjoining allotments. Permittees in non-use status are still responsible for their proportionate share of maintenance. It is the responsibility of the permittee to notify the Forest Service after each pasture has been maintained.

RIDER or PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

CATTLE DISTRIBUTION – Because riding is the most important management tool for distributing cattle, your Term Grazing Permit requires a rider 5 days a week to ensure proper cattle distribution and forage utilization.

It is also important that salting be used in underutilized areas at least ¼ mile away from water on accessible ridges and saddles. Do not place salt in the understory of trees, on meadows, near water, along maintained roads, or in areas that naturally attract cattle. Do place salt in open areas of low natural livestock concentration at least ¼ mile away from water, and on high ground such as ridges or saddles that are accessible and used as livestock travelways.

REQUIRED REPORTING FOR CATTLE - The permittee is required to keep accurate records concerning livestock movement and improvement maintenance. These records will be turned in to the Forest Service at the end of the grazing season. Please notify the Fairfield Ranger District at least five days before you plan to turn out cattle. This will give district personnel the opportunity to get a count if we so desire. Failure to provide this opportunity may negate the possibility of any future adjustments in season and any credit or refund as a result of leaving early. You are required to report movement between pastures, status of development condition and other relevant information. **We need to retrieve this grazing information no later than seven days after moving from individual pastures or off the allotment.** Reporting can also be communicated verbally or by hand delivery to the Fairfield Ranger District office.

OTHER REPORTING - Observance, documentation, and reporting of additional uses on the allotment provides valuable information with regard to overall allotment management. These uses could include: unauthorized livestock use by others, wildlife interactions, mining related activities, conflicts with other forest users, travel plan violations, etc.

ADDITIONAL CATTLE MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

- Stock are considered excess use livestock if they graze outside of the authorized season or are grazing on someone else's allotment. If significant numbers (more than just a few) of excess livestock are identified as belonging to a permittee, a bill for this use will be issued at a higher unauthorized use rate and permit action may also be taken.
- If your livestock die on National Forest Land and this occurs within 300 feet of a spring, stream, or a maintained roadway timely disposal of the carcass must occur. If this happens within a ¼ mile of a recreation facility please move the entire carcass a distance of at least a ½ mile away from the facility.

CORRAL CREEK - SHEEP MANAGEMENT – SHEEP BASIN

REQUIRED REPORTING FOR SHEEP

Information requested by the Forest must be complete, accurate, and presented in legible English (when reported in writing). After sheep have finished grazing in August, please obtain actual use information from the herder/camp tender at that time. It should be in English and turned into Renee Kehler. You can simply fax, email, or mail a hard copy report or stop by the office to formulate a short hand written or even a verbal response that can be documented for you. If you desire to email us your documentation, use the following address (rkehler@fs.fed.us).

We would like to know dates of entry and noteworthy change in sheep numbers. If a group of sheep are removed or lost during the season, we want to know the number, time period, and suspected location where this occurred. Please notify us of significant losses from predators such as wolves and poisonous plants, herding problems (whether they are logistical or related to unforeseen circumstances), conflicts with other Forest users, and any other grazing related information you feel is worthy of reporting. Remember, significant changes to this AOI must be approved by the Forest Service ahead of time and this change should be reflected in your reported information.

If you think it is worthwhile, we would also like to meet with you to complete a post-season review. The purpose of this meeting would be to obtain missing or the remainder of this year's unreported information, identify grazing successes or failures, exchange resource concerns, interpret or review previous actual use reports for completeness and legibility, and to discuss reasons why this AOI did not work as intended or ways to make it better.

Band management & Proper Sheep Grazing Use – Key Points

Each band will have at least one herder to control the sheep while on NF land. Please refer to the content under **Terms & Conditions for Sheep Grazing** for site-specific sheep use limitations.

Generally, we are more concerned about soil displacement caused by sheep than the amount of forage they consume. To prevent adverse impacts you must herd sheep to maximize distribution and minimize repeat use. Light-once-over grazing, resembling 20 percent use of current year's forage, is the main way we determine proper grazing use on sheep allotments. This practice can be achieved by spreading the sheep out and slowly grazing them across the landscape. Sheep use impacts within riparian areas are a primary resource concern. After your sheep have been adequately watered move them a distance of 100 or more yards away from the creek if you want to shade them up for the hot afternoon hours.

TERMS & CONDITIONS (T&Cs) FOR SHEEP GRAZING

These permit T&Cs are needed to move toward or to achieve the desired conditions, goals, and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, fish, riparian, soil and water resources described by the Sawtooth Forest Land & Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan or FP). The following **Forest Plan Standards** and permit T&Cs are binding limitations placed on your management actions. **Forest Plan Guidelines** represent preferred or advisable courses of action that are generally expected to be carried out.

SHEEP HERDING

1. The permittee or manager will provide sufficient herders to obtain proper distribution and management of sheep on the allotment as required by the Term Grazing Permit, Annual Operating Instructions, or Allotment Management Plan.

2. The permittee is responsible for insuring that herders understand and follow the Annual Operating Instructions and the Terms & Conditions specified in the Term Grazing Permit.
3. Graze rather than trail to water and only water once at each stream location. No watering will be allowed in lakes that are identified as closed to livestock.
4. Do not allow sheep to be shaded or bedded within 100 yards of all streams.
5. Do not bed sheep within 200 yards of campgrounds, trails, trailheads or maintained roads.
6. **FP Standard:** Practice open or loose herding and minimize the use of herding dogs.
7. **FP Standard:** Only once-over grazing is allowed with the exception of designated sheep driveways, travel routes, or where specifically authorized.
8. **FP Standard:** Only one night/one time use of bedgrounds is allowed on the Fairfield Ranger District.
9. **FP Standard:** Livestock salting is prohibited in riparian areas, under trees, or within 200 yards of water, trails, or maintained roads. Sheep will be salted only at bed grounds and salt will be placed in containers that are moved with the sheep. Tarps and salt logs meet the criteria for salting in containers.
10. **FP Guideline:** Route sheep to avoid steep slopes with loose soils, snowbanks, snow-fields, and rills or gullies.
11. During shipping operations, sheep will be confined within the corral as soon as they arrive and will remain there until all handling is completed. Before and after shipping, sheep will not be allowed to graze, shade, or bed within one quarter mile of the corral.

SHEEP CAMPS

12. Each camp will be kept clean. All litter and unburnable material will be removed from fire pits and will be hauled away for disposal off-Forest. Human waste must be buried if it is within 150 feet from water. The use of detergent in streams is prohibited.
13. Only historic and existing herder camps are approved for use. New camp locations must be approved by a Forest Service officer.
14. Camps will be kept in primitive condition. No improvements will be allowed. If a new fire pit is constructed, dismantled it and restore the area before moving your camp.
15. Herder camp use will not exceed 5 days per location unless prior permission is obtained from a Forest officer.
16. Tying pack or saddle stock to trees at camp is prohibited. If pack and saddle stock are kept close to camp they must be high-lined, picketed or hobbled.

FIRE

17. Keep employees informed of the current fire danger and the permittee's fire prevention responsibility. The Forest Service will advise the permittee when special fire restrictions become effective.
18. Exhaust from camp stoves must be filtered through a spark arrestor screen with 3/8 inch (or smaller) mesh.
19. Never leave campfires unattended.
20. Possession of an adequate shovel and bucket for fire control is required at camps.

OTHER

21. **FP Standard:** Permittees are responsible for removing sheep caused debris on all roads and trails and for repairing tread surfaces along with cut and fill slopes to the condition

prior to sheep arrival. Immediate action is required!

22. **FP Standard:** Only certified noxious weed-free feed is allowed on National Forest lands. Processed feeds such as alfalfa cubes and pellets are considered weed-free.
23. Promptly remove or bury sheep that have died within 100 yards or within view of administrative sites, system roads and trails, corrals, or sources of water. Notify the District Ranger if you want or need to request permission to deviate from this standard.
24. Contain or control guard dogs when other Forest users or their pets are nearby.
25. All predator control will be in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations.
26. Record and report grazing information according to this AOI and when requested by the District Ranger or his representative.

WOLF PRECAUTIONS

The Forest Service recommends that the following procedures be implemented:

- 1) Do not hang camp meat, keep it in containers.
- 2) Burn or pack out leftovers, garbage, and food not consumed by your dogs.

We also recommend that you work with IDF&G and Wildlife Services to implement other effective preventative actions to reduce the risk of wolf depredation.

Questions about what can or cannot be done in reference to defending flocks, harassing wolves, or shooting wolves should be directed to the Region 3/4 Fish and Game wolf biologist Jennifer Struthers at (208 989-8902); USDA APHIS Wildlife Services in Boise, Idaho (208 373-1630). Continue to work with your normal Wildlife Services representative on depredation issues.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT for CATTLE & SHEEP

Further grazing limitations or closures may be implemented during the grazing season based on resource conditions, fire danger, drought, permittee non-compliance, or other unforeseeable circumstances that appear. If such limits or closures are instructed to you, treat them as part of this AOI. Standards for livestock management or forage utilization must be met in all areas of your allotments. You will need to exit an allotment or use area if standards cannot be met due to problems or circumstances beyond your control.

DROUGHT

Grazing will be managed during drought conditions on an allotment-by-allotment basis to maintain soil and vegetative resource conditions. The circumstances created by drought make it even more important to accomplish adequate livestock distribution.

FIRE

Your cooperation with the FS in the event of wildfire on the NF or surrounding land is essential to implement successful fire suppression operations. Incident management operations take priority over activities of Forest users; therefore, fire suppression activities on the Forest or surrounding lands may dictate allotment management. In the event or threat of fire, you could be directed to remove your livestock from the Sawtooth National Forest.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

Your cooperation on noxious weed management is greatly appreciated. Only certified weed-free feed is allowed on the SNF. A Forest Service Intermountain Region-wide weed-free hay order is in effect. In addition to the certified weed-free clause in Part 3 of your Term Grazing Permit, the

weed-free hay order stipulates that you must “have each individual bale or container identified as weed-free, or have original and current evidence of weed-free certification documentation present. All markings must meet the State and/or County standards for certification as weed-free.” The Camas County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) [Ph. 208-764-3512] may enforce restrictions with regard to noxious weeds. You should contact this weed control entity to keep informed of current restrictions. Occurrence of noxious weeds or other non-native invasive species should be reported to John Shelly or any other Forest employee.

SHEEP BASIN ALLOTMENT SHEEP GRAZING

Sheep grazing will be allowed on the allotment during the 6/07-6/21 and 8/11-8/25 periods of use. Gradually use the entire allotment. Depending on the use levels reached with cattle, the sheep use period during the month of August may need to be shortened.

REPORTING FOR CATTLE & SHEEP - Sheep Basin Allotment

The enclosed Actual Use/Comment form is for you to use in recording actual livestock use, losses, and operating expenses during the upcoming grazing season. A calendar is also provided for your record keeping. You are required to report movement between pastures, status of improvement maintenance, and other relevant information. **We would like to retrieve a copy of this grazing information no later than seven days after moving off the allotment.** Report Sheep Basin sheep use on the enclosed form. You can simply call and report or stop by the office and do it in person.

CATTLE ACTUAL USE SUMMARY

Cow Creek

Hawk Gulch

Sheep Basin

Maxfield

Dates/Numbers Entered				
Dates/Numbers Exited				

Remarks: (maintenance, cattle losses, weed infestations, and unforeseen problems)

SHEEP ACTUAL USE SUMMARY

Please use the enclosed activity calendar/diary to record dates and band locations

REVIEWED BY: Peter Janns

Date 6/19/2014

APPROVED BY: Mike Dettori

Date 6/19/2014

District Ranger – Mike Dettori

Enclosures: Activity calendar/diary